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Zimmermann's Botanical Microtechnique.[2]—In bringing out so promptly an English translation of this useful work, the German edition of which reached American workers a little more than a year ago, both translator and publisher have rendered a good service to the laboratory botany of the country. The original was so well received, and had proved itself to be so useful in the laboratory, that this neatly printed and bound volume must at once find wide and general use. The beginner will find here a work which he may follow implicitly without fearing that he will laboriously learn some method, only to find a little later that it is an antiquated or discarded one.

In order to give those who have not seen the original an idea of the scope of the work we reproduce the contents of Part I.

General Methods.

1. The Observation of Living Plants and Tissues.
2. The Investigation of Dead Plants.
3. Maceration.
4. Swelling.
5. Clearing.
    A. Chemical Clearing Methods.
    B. Physical Clearing Methods.
        I. The Ordinary Method of Transfer from Water to Canada Balsam.
        II. The Transfer from Water to Canada Balsam without Alcohol.
        III. The use of other Strongly Refractive Mounting Media.
6. Live Staining.
7. Fixing and Staining Methods.
    A. Fixing. B. Removal of Fixing Fluids. C. Staining.
    D. Fixing and Staining Microscopically small Objects.
8. Microtome Technique.
    I. Imbedding in Paraffine. II. Imbedding in Celloidin. III. The Attachments of Sections.
9. Making Permanent Preparations.

From the foregoing it will be seen that every point under the head of general laboratory methods is taken up, and an examination of the paragraphs shows the thoroughness of the work. The illustrations of which there are many, add much to the usefulness of the work.

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[2] Botanica Microtechnique. A handbook of methods, for the preparation, staining and microscopical investigation of vegetable structures by Dr. A. Zimmermann, Privat-Docent in the University of Tübingen. Translated from the German by James Ellis Humphrey, S. D. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1893, pp XII, 296.

Dr. Humphrey has added here and there many valuable notes, and at the end has added six pages of useful "Tables for Reference." The literature of the subject is given with such completeness thas it requires nineteen pages. A full index with from 1200 to 1500 references completes this most satisfactory book.

CHARLES E. BESSEY.

The Letters of Asa Gray.[3]—It is rarely the case that a life is more justly and clearly set forth in a biological writing than is the life of the eminent botanist Asa Gray, in those two volumes prepared by Mrs. Gray. With rare good taste and admirable tact she has woven from the brief autobiography and the letters scattered through fifty-six years the charming story of his life. We can all wish for a such hand to set forth our life-work, when we have passed away.

The quaintly written autobiography tells of his early life, and of his struggles to reach some position in which he might do the work Nature had fitted him to do. There were many disappointments; many plans were made only to be overthrown or abandoned. At last came the appointment to the chair of Natural History in the newly chartered University of Michigan, and the year's leave of absence and commission to purchase books for its library. How well he used that year in Europe is told in the enthusiastic letters he wrote home to Dr. and Mrs. Torrey and "the girls." Thenceforward his life-work was assurred, and upon his return he took up with vigor the work on the Flora of North America with Dr. Torrey, a work which he left unfinished after forty-eight years of continuous work.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of these books in a brief notice. These extracts from letters more than fifty years apart may be suggestive. To his mother he wrote from New York in February, 1835, "I wish very much to spend a few weeks Georgia early in the spring, but I see that I shall not be able to do so. My time is spent here very profitably, and I am advancing in knowledge as fast as I ought to wish, but I make no money, or scarcely enough to live upon. Just at present I am rather behind hand, but think that by next fall I shall with ordinary success be in better circumstances. It is unpleasant to be embarrassed in such matters, for I should like much to be independent, and this with my moderate wishes would require no very large sum, and I have no great desire to be rich."

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[3] *Letters of Asa Gray.* Edited by Jane Loring Gray, in two volumes.. Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin and Company. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1893, 12 mo., 838 pp.